

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claim 2 without prejudice to or disclaimer of its subject matter. Please AMEND claims 1 and 3-14, as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, said apparatus[,] comprising:

determination means for determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time; and

auto-clear operation mode shifting means for automatically shifting to any one of a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result of said determination means[,]; and

control means for, in response to wherein when said auto-clear operation mode shifting means shifts shifting to the predetermined operation mode, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in is controlled to function a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode after the shift processing of said operation mode shifting means from among the plurality of sheet storage units.

2. (Cancelled).

3. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein
said apparatus further comprising comprises a user interface including a display device
commonly used in the respective modes, and

wherein when said auto-clear operation mode shifting means shifts to
the predetermined operation mode, display control is performed to display a window
corresponding to the operation mode after the shift on the display device in synchronism with the
control of the sheet processing apparatus.

4. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further
comprising first setting means for selecting a mode to be shifted to by said auto-clear operation
performing setting of executing shift processing of the operation mode by said operation mode
shifting means.

5. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 1, further
comprising second setting means for performing setting of assigning any one of the plurality of
operation modes to each of the plurality of sheet storage units.

6. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus
which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units,
and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an
image communication mode, and a printer mode, said method[[],]] comprising:

~~the a step of determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time; and~~

~~the a step of automatically shifting to any one of a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result in the determination step[[],]; and~~

~~a step of, in response to wherein when the operation mode is being shifted to the predetermined operation mode in the operation mode shifting step, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in is controlled to function a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode after the shift processing in the operation mode shifting step from among the plurality of sheet storage units.~~

7. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, comprising:

~~the a step of determining whether a no-operation state by an operator continues for a predetermined time; and~~

~~the a step of automatically shifting to any one of a predetermined operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes on the basis of a determination result in the determination step[[],]; and~~

a step of, in response to wherein when the operation mode is being shifted to the predetermined operation mode in the operation mode shifting step, controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in ~~is controlled to function~~ a sheet storage unit corresponding to the predetermined operation mode ~~after the shift processing in the operation mode shifting step from~~ among the plurality of sheet storage units.

8. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein said image forming apparatus can discharge a sheet of an image formation job to a sheet storage unit, corresponding to an operation mode of the image formation job, from among the plurality of sheet storage units, said apparatus comprising:

operation mode shifting means for automatically shifting an operation mode of a final image formation job to a preset specific operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes before a new job is input[[],]; and

wherein control means for controlling the sheet processing apparatus is controlled to execute setting of so as to store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the preset specific operation mode, in response to along with the shift of the operation mode by said operation mode shifting means before the new job is input.

9. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein
~~said apparatus~~ further comprising comprises display control means capable of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes, and

wherein when said operation mode shifting means shifts the operation mode, display control is performed to display a display window corresponding to the preset specific operation mode on the display device in synchronism with the control of the sheet processing apparatus.

10. (Currently Amended) An image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said apparatus comprising:

display control means capable of for displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes~~[,]~~; and

control means for, wherein when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, setting of controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet ~~is executed~~ in synchronism with display control of said display control means.

11. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein the image forming apparatus can discharge a sheet of an image formation job to a sheet storage unit, corresponding to an operation mode of the image formation job, from among the plurality of sheet storage units, said method comprising:

the a step of automatically shifting an operation mode of a final image formation job to a preset specific operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes before a new job is input; and

the a step of controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to execute setting of store a sheet in a sheet storage unit corresponding to the preset specific operation mode, in response to along with the shift of the operation mode in the operation mode shifting step before the new job is input.

12. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus, which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, wherein the image forming apparatus can discharge a sheet of an image formation job to a sheet storage unit, corresponding to an operation

mode of the image formation job, from among the plurality of sheet storage units, said program of said medium comprising:

the a step of automatically shifting an operation mode of a final image formation job to a preset specific operation mode from among the plurality of operation modes before a new job is input; and

the a step of controlling the sheet processing apparatus so as to store a sheet in execute setting of a sheet storage unit corresponding to the preset specific operation mode, in response to along with the shift of the operation mode in the operation mode shifting step before the new job is input.

13. (Currently Amended) A control method for an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units, and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said method comprising:

the a step capable of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

the a step of, when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, executing setting of controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control in the display control step.

14. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an image forming apparatus which can be connected to a sheet processing apparatus having a plurality of sheet storage units and has a plurality of operation modes including at least two modes from among a copy mode, an image communication mode, and a printer mode, to execute the following steps, wherein any one of the plurality of operation modes can be assigned to each of the plurality of sheet storage units, said program of said medium comprising:

the a step capable of displaying display windows corresponding to the operation modes on a display device independently for the respective operation modes; and

the a step of, when a display window corresponding to any one of the plurality of operation modes is to be displayed on the display device, executing setting of controlling a sheet storage unit, corresponding to the operation mode of the window to be displayed, so as to store a sheet in synchronism with display control in the display control step.